

KAROECHO (KE) Meeting Minutes May 14, 2018 (2nd Monday of month)

There were 14 in attendance. (Our attendee list is kept separately in Excel.)
Meeting began with review and approval of the April meeting minutes

One item of old business was to locate Ginny Summerer and present her with an ARRL Certificate of Merit for her many years of regular chairing of the KE Monday Meetings and acting as Net Control Station of the Thursday night net. Marian and Hal were tasked with this.

New Business

Don reported on the status of recovering and restoring to function the existing KE radios that have been unused or in storage for some years. Five radios have been collected and repaired by Don and Jamuel, with two more in the queue. Several antennas are designated for refurbishment and possible relocation – those being at the El Cerrito Senior Center (which is being moved at the end of June), at Tassajara Park and at the Born residence in Kensington.

A second development is that KE is now working on some options for types of radios that may be used or deployed in disaster drills and the real event. The original ham radio system that was set up in the early CERT days consisted of Kenwood TM-733 and TM-740 series base sets in public buildings which were the expected sites for CERT staging areas – fire stations, senior centers, public schools, community centers. Today the CERT areas are expecting to use local transmit locations close to or at their staging areas and ICPs – some of which may be the original sites but some not.

So KE is preparing with the ECFD two additional sets of radios (in addition to the base sets operating in fixed locations) - portable stations and mobile stations – which can be placed in chosen locations, but not permanently kept there. These are especially valuable if the designated site is unusable due to disaster damage. These radio options and their status was reviewed.

Outreach Efforts were next. Rob McNicholas has prepared, produced and distributed an excellent mailer/handout which has been sent to all new hams in EC&K since 2016 (17 in all) to acquaint them with KE and its' programs. A second mailing is in hand to the mailing list of the hams who were involved with the CERT-KE program in 2009 - 2016.

In addition, Rob has created an excellent website – karoecho.net which is kept up to date at all times and has much information both for the existing cadre but for all local hams interested in ham radio here. He also created a Facebook page for KAROECHO.

Don and Rob have also reached out to the other local ham groups so that KE info and links are now posted by MDARC, EBARC, MARS, CCCC on their websites.

Another outreach effort is to the local Scout troops – to start a dialogue with their leads about scout related ham efforts.

Another outreach effort is that several of the Richmond hams are now attending the KE meetings and we expect to strengthen the relationship with this group of active radio operators.

Public Service – We are starting to explore possible Public Service activities for KE. One of particular interest is setting up a Kensington-El Cerrito component of the Red Flag Fire Patrols. KE members were long-time participants in these, but now we need to reevaluate how to restart this effort. We will consult the ECFD to get their guidance on what they would want in this area.

Another option is for KE to participate in this June's Field Day. Our two neighboring clubs – EBARC and NALCO worked together last year for Field Day and found the expanded effort was appreciated by both clubs. We will see if some from KE will want to add our club to this summer's event.

A third option is to participate in the FAGES II Scout Hike – June 2 – a 20 mile hike from 7AM to 7PM. We will try to use new mobile equipment for our participants in this. Ken Fowler –ko6no@comcast.net is the radio lead for this event.

Training & Drills – we will be considering some start-up drills this summer using new equipment, new antennas and new operators. These Summer Simulated Emergency Test (SET) drills will be led by Don .

This will occur in different CERT areas as each area works to establish how it will communicate with the EOC in an emergency. If these drills get enough areas ready by the fall we will attempt to carry out a full scale, all area emergency radio exercise in October (tentatively on Saturday, October 13).

Another effort which is under way is our weekly training net exercise which occurs on 146.415 immediately after the call-in and announcements portion of our regular net. The latest exercise was the use of ICS 213 forms to carry out first responder required forms used to send information from the CERT areas to the EOC.

At the end of the meeting we had Show and Tell session where Don demonstrated some mobile antennas and Texx showed some standard connectors for field use.